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TAGS: [KGHG](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#)
SUBJECT: SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE: U.S. ENGAGEMENT IN
DECEMBER NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 112885 (NOTAL)

[1](#)1. This is an action request. Please see paragraph 10.

OBJECTIVES

[1](#)2. Department asks EUR posts to work to ensure host country officials and opinion leaders understand that the United States is committed to advancing international climate negotiations at the UN conference in Poland December 1-12. We want to convey that we remain serious in our pursuit of an effective new global approach to climate change, and that with the change of administration we expect a smooth transition of our efforts in the climate negotiations.

[1](#)3. Among our goals is to ensure negotiating space for the United States as the new administration develops its positions on climate change. This could include complex and potentially lengthy processes involving the Congress on what measures the United States may take at home to further reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

[1](#)4. As we look ahead to the targeted conclusion of international climate negotiations in December 2009 in Copenhagen, we want to ensure that this December's UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Poznan sets a solid foundation by producing a deeper understanding of Parties, priorities and expectations. We also want to ensure that Poznan does not result in partial or premature decisions, and that any outcomes are fully compatible with longstanding and bipartisan U.S. positions.

BACKGROUND

[1](#)5. Over the past year, the United States has been developing new and enhanced positions on the range of issues under negotiation. We believe that these together form a negotiating stance that is ambitious and practical, and representative of bipartisan U.S. views.

[1](#)6. For more than a decade, the Congress and successive U.S. administrations have emphasized the same two principles for U.S. engagement in international efforts to address climate change. In essence, there exists a national position that U.S. participation in any climate agreements is contingent on ensuring the participation of other major economies (including major emerging economies), and on avoiding undue disruption to the U.S. economy. This degree of consensus on the U.S. international stance contrasts with the more divergent views on how the United States should go about reducing its own emissions.

[1](#)7. Expectations are high for a new climate agreement-- in some cases unrealistically high. At the recent UNFCCC talks in Warsaw (reftel) China and some G-77 representatives

continued to suggest they should receive hundreds of billions of dollars in new financial aid, without any apparent commitments on their part to reduce their emissions. Moreover, some countries continue to call for the United States to commit to greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020 -- a level far deeper than those proposed by Members of Congress of either party or by President-elect Obama as a candidate.

¶8. Action officers interested in a non-governmental perspective on U.S. participation in a future climate regime are encouraged to review an article published by the Heinrich Boll foundation, &The U.S. Elections and Prospects for a New Climate Agreement⁸ available at : <http://www.boell.de/climate-transatlantic/index-117.html> . The author suggests that unrealistic expectations over U.S. positions could weaken prospects for an environmentally effective international agreement.

¶9. Action officers are welcome to contact OES/EGC Ed Fendley or EUR/PGI David Tessler with any questions or comments on these issues.

GUIDANCE POINTS

¶10. Posts are encouraged to draw from the points below as they engage host government, NGO, and other local contacts to discuss the upcoming UNFCCC conference in Poznan and explain

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USG position.

--We remain fully committed to negotiating a post-2012 climate regime that is environmentally effective and economically sustainable.

--With the change of administration, we fully expect a smooth transition of our efforts in the climate negotiations.

--At the December climate conference in Poznan and in subsequent meetings, we will work constructively to ensure that all of the primary elements of the Bali Action Plan) a shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology, and finance) can come together to form a package approach for consideration in Copenhagen in 2009.

--The work plan and timeline we have developed for implementing the Bali Action Plan gives us time to consider these issues. We consider Poznan to be an important milestone toward Copenhagen, and that it affords an important opportunity to share views, take stock and clarify points of agreement and difference.

--As is the case with all important international endeavors, our decision to participate in a new climate regime will involve the U.S. executive branch and the Congress, and we expect extensive consultations on these issues to continue over the coming year.

--We expect that the United States and all countries that are contributing to climate change will take actions to mitigate their emissions, and that they will report to the international community on their actions in a measurable and verifiable manner.

--So that our efforts can be durable and earn support in each of our countries, we expect that the approach we take will help, not hinder, our economies.

--There is a longstanding bipartisan consensus in the United States on the need for developing country participation and avoiding undue economic harm.

--We noted with interest the EU Environment Council's recent suggestion of the need for developing countries, as well as the United States and other developed countries, to

significantly reduce emissions.

--We hope you agree that it is very important that the negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change proceed in a way that facilitates U.S. participation.

--We invite you to consider our views on the range of issues under negotiation.

Supplementary GUIDANCE Points on U.S. VIEWS

¶11. In addition to the points that follow, action officers may wish to review U.S. submissions to the UNFCCC Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, available at: <http://unfccc.int/meetings/items/4381.php>

Mitigation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

--We believe that there needs to be an emphasis on common aspects of the outcome, not just aspects that are differentiated among countries. Unchecked emissions growth from developing countries means we will fail to address climate change.

---All countries should take on nationally appropriate mitigation actions.

---All actions should be quantified and reported, and the progress of each Party should be verified over time.

---All Parties, actions should have the same international legal character, for example, legally binding, politically binding or voluntary. That is, the U.S. would accept internationally binding commitments only if China and other key countries would also accept them.

Financing and Technology:

--We are working to enhance our partnerships with countries around the world to increase trade and investment in clean energy technologies, including through the Asia-Pacific Partnership, the Global Environment Facility, and the World Bank Clean Technology Fund (CTF).

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--We believe that any new or enhanced financing tools must recognize and build on the financial capacity of the recipient country. Major emerging economies have a level of financial and technical capacity far greater than two decades ago.

--It is important to carefully consider what national governments can be reasonably expected to do through their own policies and resources, consistent with their obligations under the Convention.

--We are also mindful of what will be politically palatable in the U.S. domestic context. We ask whether any of the finance-related proposals coming forward are likely to be met with support from the U.S. Congress and members of the public.

Adaptation

--Adaptation to changing climate occurs at national, regional, and local levels and is an inherent part of development planning. We believe that discussions over the next two years can do much to orient actions toward greater attention to adaptation, and to generate resources for populations that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

--Adaptation is directly linked to development. Success or failure in adaptation will be determined primarily by the

actions of the country itself. No amount of aid will be as important as whether governments choose sensible development paths that increase resiliency to any number of risks. And private sector support and financing will be a critical component.

--The UNFCCC can act as a catalyst to mobilize private sector funding and investment and to build capacity in developing countries to better take advantage of such financing. Critical components are sound investment enabling environments and development policies.
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